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# Uwa language

The **Uwa language**, *Uw Cuwa*, commonly known as **Tunebo**, is a Chibchan language spoken by between 1,800 and 3,600 of the Uwa people of Colombia, out of a total population of about 7,000.[3]

| Uwa | |
|---|---|
| Tunebo | |
| *Uw Cuwa* | |
| **Native to** | Colombia, formerly in Venezuela |
| **Region** | the largest groups live on the northern slopes of the Sierra Nevada del Cocuy, Boyacá Department |
| **Ethnicity** | U'wa |
| **Native speakers** | 3,550 (2000)[1] |
| **Language family** | Chibchan<br>▪ Chibcha–Motilon<br>▪ Chibcha–Tunebo<br>▪ **Uwa** |
| **Language codes** | |
| **ISO 639-3** | Variously:<br>`tnd` – Angosturas Tunebo/*Bahiyakuwa*<br>`tbn` – Barro Negro Tunebo (Eastern Tunebo/*Yithkaya*)<br>`tuf` – Central Tunebo (Cobaría/*Kubaru'wa* & Tegría/*Tagrinuwa*)<br>`tnb` – Western Tunebo (Aguas Blancas/*Rikuwa*) |
| **Glottolog** | `tune1260 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tune1260)`[2] |

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## Varieties

There are half a dozen known varieties. Communication between modern varieties can be difficult, so they are considered distinct languages.

Adelaar (2004) lists the living

- central dialects Cobaría and Tegría on the northern slopes of the Sierra Nevada del Cocuy,
- a western group near Agua Blanca in the departments of Santander and Norte de Santander,
- an eastern group at a place called *Barro Negro* in the lowlands of Arauca and Casanare,
- and the extinct dialect Sínsiga near Chita, Boyacá.

Umaña (2012) lists Cobaría, Tegría, Agua Blanca, Barro Negro.

Berich lists the dialects Cobaría; Agua Blanca (= Uncasía, Tamarana, Sta Marta); Rinconada, Tegría, Bócota, & Báchira

Cassani lists Sínsiga, Tegría, Unkasía (= Margua), Pedraza, Manare, Dobokubí (= Motilón)

Osborn (1989) lists

- Bethuwa (= Pedraza, extinct),
- Rikuwa (Dukarúa, = Agua Blanca),
- Tagrinuwa (Tegría),

- Kubaruwa (Cobaría),
- Kaibaká (= Bókota),
- Yithkaya (= San Miguel / Barro Negro),
- Bahiyakuwa (= Sínsiga),
- Biribirá,
- and Ruba,

the latter all extinct

Fabre (2005) lists:

- Bontoca (perhaps the same as the Bókota = Kaibaká cited in Osborn), of the mountains of Guican
- Cobaría, along the Cobaría River
- Pedraza or Bethuwa [= Angosturas?], along the Venezuelan border; extinct
- Sínsiga, in the Guican mountains, recorded from Chita, Boyaca in 1871
- Tegría or Tagrinuwa, along the Cobaría River
- Unkasia, along the Chitiga and Marga rivers (Telban 1988)

Additional names in Loukotka are Manare and Uncasica (presumably a spelling variant of Unkasía/Uncacía), as well as Morcote, of which nothing is known. Manare, at the source of the Casanare, is Eastern Tunebo.

# Phonology

## Vowel

| | **Front** | **Back** |
|---|---|---|
| **High** | i | u |
| **Mid** | e | o |
| **Low** | a | |

## Consonants

| | **Labial** | **Alveolar** | **Palatal** | **Velar** | **Labio-velar** | **Glottal** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Voiceless stop** | | t | | k | kʷ | ʔ |
| **Voiced Stop** | b | | | | | |
| **Fricative** | | s | ʃ | | | h |
| **Nasal** | m | n | | | | |
| **Vibrant** | | r | | | | |
| **Oral semi-vowel** | w | | j | | | |
| **Nasal semi-vowel** | w̃ | | | | | |

## Notes

1. Angosturas Tunebo/*Bahiyakuwa* (https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/tnd/) at *Ethnologue* (19th ed., 2016)
   Barro Negro Tunebo (Eastern Tunebo/*Yithkaya*) (https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/tbn/) at *Ethnologue* (19th ed., 2016)
   Central Tunebo (Cobaría/*Kubaru'wa* & Tegría/*Tagrinuwa*) (https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/tuf/) at *Ethnologue* (19th ed., 2016)
   Western Tunebo (Aguas Blancas/*Rikuwa*) (https://www.ethnologue.com/19/language/tnb/) at *Ethnologue* (19th ed., 2016)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Tunebo" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tune1260). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Adelaar & Muysken (2004:109)

## References


- Adelaar, Willem F. H.; Muysken, Pieter C. (2004). *The Languages of the Andes*. Cambridge University Press.
- Alain Fabre 2005. *Diccionario etnolingüístico y guía bibliográfica de los pueblos indígenas sudamericanos (http://www.ling.fi/Entradas%20diccionario/Dic=Chibcha.pdf)*.


## External links

- uwacolombia.org (http://uwacolombia.org)


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